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The bells of old Quebec.

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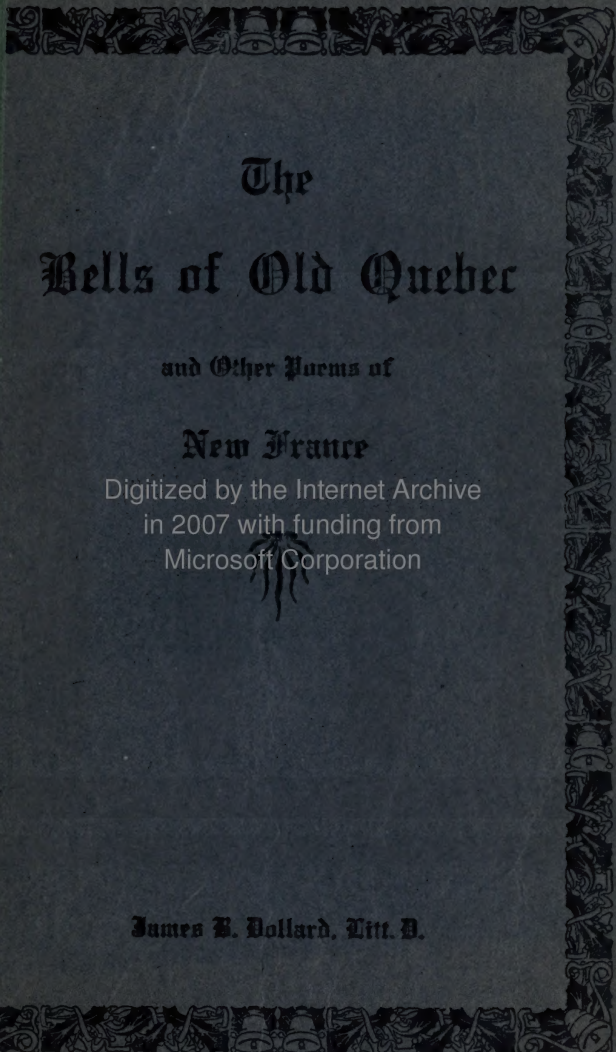
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The
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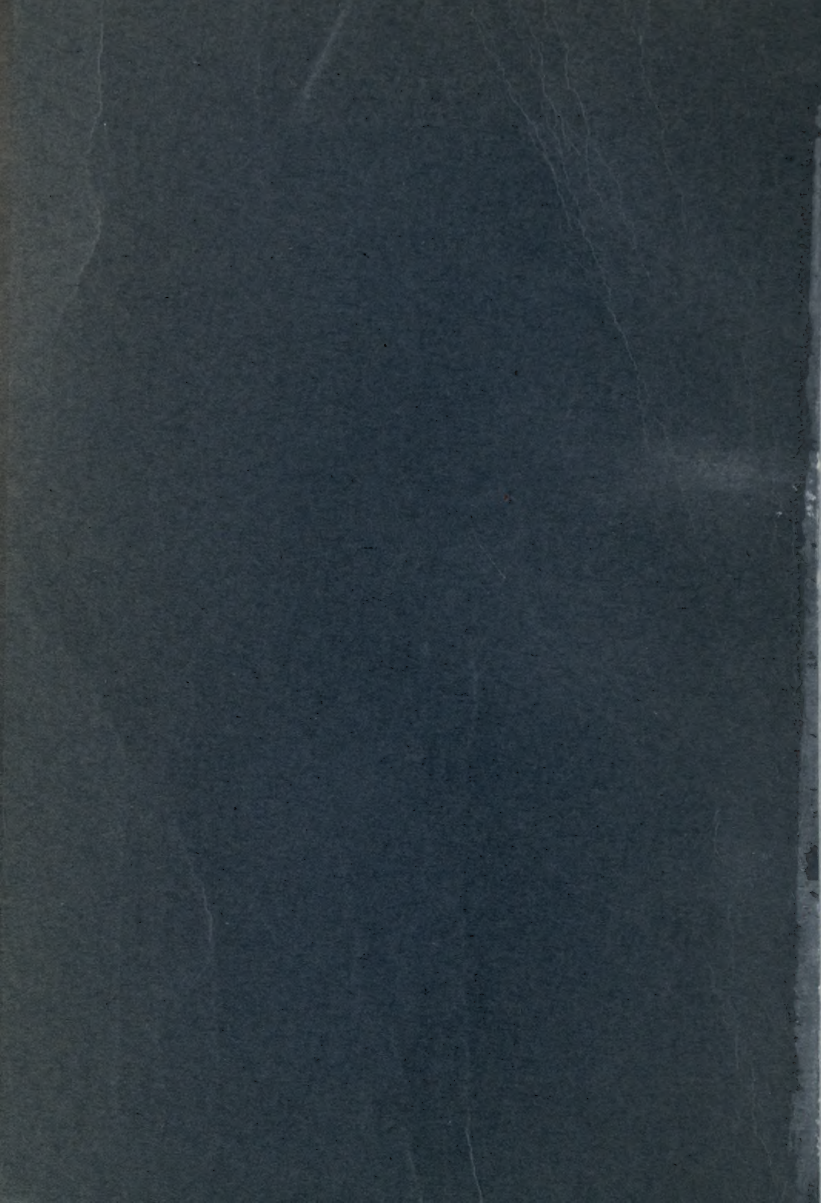
and Other Poems of

New France

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James B. Dollard, Litt. D.



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The Bells of Old Quebec
and Other Poems of
New France

By JAMES B. DOLLARD, Litt.D.



1920

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Dedication



To the Very Rev. Charles Lecoq, P.S.S., of Montreal, formerly Superior of the Sulpician Order in Canada, and of the Grand Seminary of Montreal.

To you, as one of those great priests whom God
And France, the eldest Daughter of the Church,
Have sent for saving of this favoured land,
I dedicate these verses.

This New France

Must be a worthy land, and this strong race,—
Descendants of the Norman pioneers,—
Must have true qualities that they could claim
The love and the devotion and the zeal
Lavished upon them by such priests as you!

May they be prompt to heed your high advice,
And, following your wise leadership, attain
Those heights of Christian virtue and of faith
You have petitioned for them, offering up
To God your sacrifice of prayerful days
Your gold of service and your myrrh of pain.

PREFACE

The subjects treated of in this little book of poems are all French-Canadian, and most of them belong to the earliest portion of the history of Canada.

All Canadians worthy of the name should study closely the story of the men and events of early Canada,—the Canada of the French regime, which is often called New France. It is, perhaps, the most romantic and the most interesting part of the history of Canada. It takes in a rather long period, for, from the coming of Jacques Cartier in 1534, to the capture of Quebec by the British under Wolfe, in 1759, there elapsed an interval of 225 years. That is how long the French were in Canada ahead of anybody else.

During these pioneer days a severe and incessant struggle was maintained between the newly-founded colony and the fierce Indian tribes, who resented the intrusion of the whites. In the persons of many of their early governors, soldiers, explorers, and *coureurs-de-bois*, the French colonists attained to the highest possible point of human heroism and unselfishness. The heroism of the layman was equalled by that of the clergy, especially of the Jesuits, who suffered all kinds of privation and torture in order that they might carry the message of the Gospel to the

treacherous and degraded Indian tribes. The story of the Jesuit Missions in the Huron Country is of surpassing interest at the present day. Huronia might now be roughly described as all that land included in the circle formed by the towns of Orillia, Barrie, Collingwood, Midland, and Waubaushene.

In 1626 two Jesuit Fathers, John de Brébeuf and De Noue, arrived in this region and immediately began to Christianize these tribes.

With a short interruption caused by an English raid on Quebec (1629 to 1634) the Jesuits continued to preach the Gospel to the Hurons until the destruction of the nation and the breaking up of the Mission by the attacks of the merciless Iroquois in 1648-49. The story of the labours and sufferings and martyrdom of the heroic Jesuits, makes one of the most sublime and touching pages in the whole history of Canada.

The narratives of how Fathers John de Brébeuf, Lalement, Jogues, Daniel, Garnier, etc., faced unflinchingly the threats and terrors of the Iroquois, and died in testimony of their Faith, and in defence of their converts, is one that makes the heart beat faster, and the cheeks glow with admiration for those heroic pioneers of the Cross. All the scenes of their labours and death are situated about one hundred miles north of Toronto. And there, in the blessed Huron Land, can be seen to-day the relics of the Huron villages of Ossossanee, Ihonatiria, Teanaostaye, Cahiague, etc., as well as remnants of the forts and chapels erected by the saintly Jesuits.

Gazing out of the train, on the Grand Trunk Railway, within three miles of Midland, the traveller can plainly see, on the banks of the little River Wye, the ruins of Fort Ste. Marie, which was the central house of the Jesuit Missionaries to the Hurons. In the little graveyard of the House reposes the hallowed dust of the ever illustrious martyrs, Brebeuf and Lalement! A few miles away, near Waubaushene, is the site of St. Ignace, where those two great servants of God died at the stake!

Surely the Catholics of Ontario have reason to be proud of the glorious heritage bequeathed to them by these noble priests of their Faith. Is it asking too much of them to beg that they would study reverently and lovingly the records of these Huron Missions, and hold dear in their heart of hearts the memory and the sacrifice of these heroic Jesuits whose life and death have shed such imperishable lustre on the early history of Ontario and of all Canada?

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THE BELLS OF OLD QUEBEC.

From Normandie and Brittany
They came, in days of old,
With Cartier and Roberval
And Champlain brave and bold;
And as they swung across the seas,
High on each crowded deck,
They bore the bells, the Catholic bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

O! listen to those golden bells
That sound so sweet and clear!
From Batiscan to Sillery
They carol—"Christ is here,"
From Beaupre to La Magdaleine,
"Hail Virgin, free from speck"—
The olden bells, the golden bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

Their sound is heard above the waves
On many a lonely strand,
And broad St. Lawrence echoes back
In accents soft and bland.
Wild flood and rushing cataract,
White-maned with foam and fleck,
Resound the bells, the wandering bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

When summer comes with scented days,
And boughs with blossoms bend,
The songs of all the woodland birds
With children's voices blend;
But when the calm of evening falls
Their joyous din they check,
To hear the bells, the Angelus bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

Then labourers in far-off fields
Bow low their heads to pray,
And boatmen, resting from the oar,
Their pious "aves" say;
E'en the rough axemen in the woods
Who light of perils reckon,
They bless the bells, the homeland bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

Bells of the grand old Catholic Faith
Long may your notes proclaim,
By wide St. Lawrence' deepening wave,
The glories of God's Name!
And may this strong Canadian race
All plots of Evil wreck,
While peal the bells, the carillon bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

O! listen to those golden bells
That sound so sweet and clear!
From Batiscau to Sillery
They carol—"Christ is near."
From Beaupre to La Magdaleine:
"Hail Virgin free from speck!"
The olden bells, the golden bells,
The bells of old Quebec!

THE HABITANT

Beside the mighty River
His white-walled village stands,
And there he tills in patience
His long and narrow lands.

In patience and contentment
He goes his changeless way,
Kindly of heart and human,
Honest as God's own day.

Over the smiling landscape
Loom up his high church-spires,
He keeps Faith's beacons burning
Lit by his Breton sires.

His eyes show fear of no man,
His hands are hard with toil,
Through years of want and plenty
He ploughs his stubborn soil.

Year in, year out, he labours;
His household prospers there,
He sees his boys grow stalwart,
His daughters blithe and fair.

Out on the world he gazes,
As wide St. Lawrence flows,
No envy stirs his bosom,
No hatred of his foes.

He asks but the right to labour
In peace, and then to lie
Under the great spire's shadow,
Under God's friendly sky!

ETIENNE BRULÉ: COUREUR DE BOIS.

(Time, 1615; Place, The Iroquois Country).

Cool head and mighty heart were his,
Bequeathed from Norman sires,
So might he, coming safe and far,
Eschew the softening ways that mar,—
Nor man nor beast nor demon bar
His course to western shires!

So might he leave a land of ease,
Of pictured vale and town,
To cross uproarious ocean-plains,
And take as part of his domains
The Indian Trail where horror reigns,
And Death stalks up and down!

His feet were swift as startled deer,
His eyes were vulture-bright;
In faith he learned from God the ways
Of man and beast; to tread the maze
Of darkening forest. To his gaze
All paths were shown aright!

The woods were full of fearful shapes,
Human and brute they were;
But he walked through them lithe and tall,
With iron tube and splintering ball,
And soon he strode the lord of all,
The master spirit there!

The Indian tribes were fierce and fell,
And blood to them was sweet;
His guns drowned out their wildest yell;
And all their rage from blackest hell,
He cowed as with magician's spell—
They grovelled at his feet!

One day they led him to the stake,
(A tribe 'gainst him alone),
And when they laid their firebrands red
On his bare limbs and breast and head,
He smiled and mocked his captors dread,—
Their tortures drew no moan!

O great of heart and strong of will,
Unmatched Coureur de bois!
No longer does the race of men
Produce thy kind. No tongue or pen
Can make such high hearts beat again,—
Pure gold without alloy!

Sleep well in thy Canadian clay,
While o'er thy unmarked grave
The requiem of the forest booms
And Summer burns and Winter glooms,
And thewless corpses clog the tombs—
O, bravest of the brave!



THE JESUIT TRAIL

He who would follow the Jesuit trail
O'er the darkening Huron plain,
Must bear the whip of the icy gale,
Hunger and thirst and pain!
Must lose his life for Jesus' sake,
Give up his heart's desire,
Nor shrink when the Iroquois drives the stake
And heaps the torture-fire!

He who would scorn the Jesuit Faith,
Let him dare be brave as they!
Let him wait the horror of slow-wrought death
In fear by night and day!
Let him live with fiends; let him hear their yell
That makes the heart run cold;
Teach them and love and serve them well,
Nor hope for fame or gold!

Follow the bloody trail of Jogues
Where the Mohawk war-bands go!
Follow the paths where Vimont trod;
Daniel and Ragueneau,
Bressani, Garnier, Chabanel,
Brebeuf and Lalement!
Follow the perilous Jesuit trail—
Your souls had need be strong!

The road to Heaven is steep and hard
Where only the chosen tread;
They pass, unspotted and unmarred,
Christ's banners at their head;
But there be souls who find their King
Through blood and fire and gale,
And men still tremble, marvelling,
To view the Jesuit Trail!

The noble of soul have enemies,
And the Jesuits have their foes,
Whose flood of hideous calumnies
Adown the ages flows.
But in his heart must be no dross,
His soul must never quail,
Who takes from the hands of Christ his cross,
And walks the Jesuit Trail!



THE JESUIT "RELATIONS"*

Among the true recitals of great deeds
Done by the sons of men, the Jesuits,
In their "Relations," handed down to us
The noblest and the greatest. Other men
Faced toil and danger that they might get fame
In finding of new lands or hidden gold,
But the good Jesuit missionaries went forth
For Christ's dear sake and for the love of souls.
Their stories were set down in Indian camps,
Where dirt and degradation ringed them round,
And insect pests made life unbearable.

Hungry they were and treated worse than dogs,
Wounded and scorned by their savage hosts,
Who rather were their jailers.

Oftentimes

When they were seen to write, the sorcerers
Cried out that they were working evil spells,
And set the tribes against them. Hard it was
To write in such surroundings, yet the style
Of these "Relations" is direct and plain,
Stamped with sincerity. They set not down
Self-glorifying phrases, nor made much
Of their incessant martyrdom. /We gain

*This poem is mostly a paraphrase of Reuben Gold Thwaites' Introduction to the Cleveland edition of the Relations, 1896; pages 39, 41.

From them a vivid picture of the life
Lived in primeval forests in those days
By the wild Indian tribes.

 We see the priest
Squatted among the dusky savages
On their long voyages in light canoes,
And toiling at the paddle. Or we see
The huge loads carried on the portage-trail.
Or haply the poor missionary is made
The butt and scorn of the howling camp;
He is deserted in the wilderness,
Beaten with sticks, and maimed, and left to die;
And if he should survive and come at length
Unto the journey's end, he seeks in vain
A shelter in the natives' squalid huts,
For though his heart is open unto all,
The hands of all are raised against him there!

So in some far-off village lodged at last
The priest with anxious labours seeks to save
The pagans from damnation, teaching them
Of God and Christ and of their precious souls
That must be ransomed. He baptizes some,
Sowing the good seed in their savage breasts;
A little joy begins to comfort him,
Hope lights the awful darkness. But, alas!
The Demon's power is strong; the sorcerers
(Who seem to him real demons from the Pit!)
Angered because he kills their influence,
Rouse up the natives' superstitious fears
By lies and calumnies. A hellish rage
Is stirred in the whole tribe, that sweeps away
All vestige of his toil and sacrifice,
And brings him death or torture! Such the life
Led by the Jesuit Fathers, yet their pens
Have left a wondrous picture of the tribes

And of their laws and customs, so that now
Ethnologists and delvers in the Past
Declare that these "Relations" are to-day
Priceless and peerless records of the race
That peopled these vast regions long ago,
And filled the land with horror and with blood!



THE FIRST MASS IN ONTARIO

The Huron tribes upon the Georgian Bay
Were thirty thousand strong when first they came
Under the notice of the missionaries.
In sixteen hundred and fifteen, Champlain
The first French Governor, sent out to them
The Recollets, St. Francis' noble sons,
And one of these, Le Caron, made his way
Seven hundred miles along the Ottawa,
Across Lake Nipissing, and out from there
By the French River to the Georgian Bay.

He found these Hurons a degraded race,
Plunged in idolatry and superstition,
Yet all the more compassion moved his heart,
And soon Le Caron built a chapel there
Of poles and strips of bark. At this blest spot
Called Carhagouha on the Georgian Bay,
In Sixteen-Fifteen, on the hallowed date
Of August 12th, the Holy Mass was said
For the first time in all Ontario!

Besides the flashing waters of the North
There in the lonely woods, the Son of God
Came down among His people and made glad
Their wondering hearts! Full oft in after years
That mystic rite was consummated here
By holy priests and brought upon the land
The blessings dearest to the Sacred Heart—
Conversions of innumerable souls,
And shedding of the blood of Christ's own saints,
Till all this land became a sanctuary
Sacred to God and famed throughout His Church!

THE DEATH-FEAST OF ECHON.*

Long in the weird and mournful Huron Land
Brebeuf abode before his martyrdom,
Teaching the Word of God. His tireless feet
Sought out the Bear clan at Ossossanee
By Nottawasaga's wave, and thence he reached
Ihonatiria on the Northern shore
And Teanaostaye of the tribe of Cord,
And Teandeouiata, savage and remote,
And Cahiaqué. But a pestilence
Fell on the tribes, whose sorcerers cried out
That De Brebeuf alone had brought it on,
With all their other scourges—the great drought,
Failure of crops, and scarcity of game!

So there were murmurings and threatenings,
And many clamoured for the Jesuit's blood.
At length the tribes were wrought to such a pitch
That the brave "Echon" felt his death was nigh,
And so he wrote to his Superior,
At far Quebec, a message of farewell
And resignation to God's holy will.

There was a Huron custom, coming down
From ages past, that one about to die
By condemnation, should prepare a feast
A farewell banquet to which all would come;
And this strange custom De Brebeuf invoked,
Calling the Hurons in from far and near,
And when they had assembled in the lodge,

*Echon was Brebeuf's Huron name.

He made them sermon, telling how that death
Was but a joyful thing to him, and meant
His passage from this dreary world to peace
And bliss eternal. "But," he said, "for you
My death will mean a dreadful stain and sin
Upon your burdened souls. Oh, ponder then,
And pause before you do this wicked thing,
Which surely will bring down the wrath of God."

Thus spoke the father, and the Huron hordes
Were melted to a sudden penitence
Of all their dread designs. And it befell
That he was spared! And on that happy day
The wild birds sang by far Ossossanee
A song of gladness. On the Northern shore
Ihonatiria saw the bright waves leap
On sunny sands; and all that Huron Land,
Bathed in Heaven's sunshine, basked serene,
Knowing the Powers of Darkness overthrown!



BREBEUF AND LALEMENT.

The Jesuit Missionaries, Fathers Jean De Brebeuf and Gabriel Lalement, were tortured to death by the Iroquois at St. Ignace on the Georgian Bay, March 16th, 1649.

A few days past I saw an Iroquois
Walking Toronto's streets. His dreadful face
Was craggy like a cliff, twisted and seamed
And furrowed with the passions of his race!
His fearful eyes were bloodshot and opaque,
Rolling, as Cain's eyes rolled, accursed of God!
And then I thought of thousands such as he
Only more savage and more cruel, ranged
Around two lonely figures on a hill—
Two Christian martyrs, Lalement and Brebeuf!

* * * * *

Their eyes were burned out, their flesh was seared
And roasted with the red-hot tomahawks!
Then boiling water on their brows was poured
In mimic baptism. Bark, resin-smear'd,
Enclosed their limbs and then was set on fire!
Their scalps were lifted up to form a crown;
The Iroquois cried out: "You taught us once,
The greater sufferings the greater crown—
Now should you thank us for this torturing!"

Brebeuf stood there, a giant among men,
Blinded, his tongue torn out, his limbs all burned,
His fingers lopped away, his lips hacked off!
Soundless he stood, impassive as a stone.
No groan escaped him, for he stood with Christ
In spirit at the Cross of Calvary!

* * * * *

So great his strength, so torture-proof his frame
The Iroquois were stricken with amaze
And panic-fear. They cried "He is a god!
We cannot kill him, he will have revenge."
A bolder chief then took his axe and split
The martyr's side, tore out his heart and ate!
All drank his blood that they might have, like him,
Courage to flout all torture! Thus he died
The bravest of thy sons, O, glorious France!
And Lalement, the gentle and the mild,
Writhed in torture all that day and night
Till Death released him too from every pain!

* * * * *

The Huron Land is populous to-day
With many a town and village, but the hour
These martyrs suffered, silent stretched the woods
For endless miles. By far Ossossanée
The loon reigned lone. Unheard at Machedash
The tall pines sighed, and on the sandy beach
Thy ripples plashed unnoticed, Couchiching!
But all that Huron Land is blessed to-day
Because their precious blood was shed for Christ
At St. Ignace! The autumn trees ablaze
Tell to the pitying winds the deathless tale
Of two great souls that conquered pain and Death
For Christ's dear sake—Brebeuf and Lalement!

THE DEATH OF FATHER
ANTHONY DANIEL

At Cahiague on Lake Simcoe's shore
For many years had Daniel ministered
Unto the Hurons of the tribe called Rock,
And great the harvest was. There came a day
When all the Rock tribe left Lake Simcoe's shores
And inland went, to Teanaostaye,
Fearing the Iroquois. Then Daniel, too,
Like the Good Shepherd clung unto his flock,
And during two more years awaited death
In unremitting zeal and labour. He
Had gone in June to near-by Sainte Marie
To make his annual retreat, and feed
His soul by commune with the Holy Ghost;
Eight days he spent in fasting and in prayer,
Then hurried back to Teanaostaye.

The morning of the first day home had dawned
And Daniel had said Mass, when there appeared
Outside the palisade the dreaded foe—
The savage Iroquois! Wild terror seized
The Hurons, caught unarmed and unprepared;
But Daniel went among them without fear,
Baptizing all the neophytes and giving
Last Absolution to the frightened crowds.
Then went he to the cabins of the aged
And sick, and dying, ministering to each!

Meanwhile the Iroquois had broken through
The weak defences. In a howling mob
They rushed toward the church, but quick re-
coiled,

For at the door the intrepid Daniel stood
And calmly faced their fury! Deep amazed
They saw the Blackrobe front their hellish rage!
(Never was more dramatic pause than that;
Never sublimer faith and sacrifice!
O, ye who mock the Jesuit and his Faith,
Would ye have courage strong enough to stand
Between his victims and the Iroquois?)

At length the spell was broken; arrows flew
Straight for that noble heart. An arquebus
Fired at his breast inflicted mortal wound;
Thus Daniel fell and breathed unto God
His pure and holy soul! The Iroquois
All washed their hands and faces in his blood,
That they, too, might be brave and conquer fear.
The body of the martyr then they flung
Into the burning church, a holocaust
Of soul and body for the Master's cause!

* * * * *

Thus finished this brave Jesuit's career,
A life full precious before God and man.
For fourteen years among the Hurons there,
Severest trials and sufferings he had borne
And he was, too, the first of all to die
Of those who laboured there! Writing of him
In the "Relations," Father Ragueneau
Tells us that Daniel seemed to have been born
For the salvation of the Huron tribes.
He had no greater passion or desire
Than that he might lay down his life for them.

Then adds the chronicler these touching words:
"If from our losses God will but receive
A greater glory, they will be to us
A constant source of gladness. We but ask
Whate'er it cost us, that the blessed host
Of His elect be furthermore increased;
Our labours are for Heaven and not for Earth."*

*Jesuit Relations. Cleveland Edition, Vol. xxxix., page
241.

THE DEATH OF CHABANEL.

The Jesuit martyr, Noël Chabanel,
At St. Ignace was comrade of Brebeuf.
Till he received, from his Superior,
Orders to leave and go to the Petuns.
His place at St. Ignace was taken then
By Gabriel Lalement. A month flew by,
And then came on the furious Iroquois,
And Lalement and Brebeuf received the crown
Of martyrdom!

The holy Chabanel
Felt keenly in his loving heart that Christ
Had deemed him yet unworthy of the bliss
Of dying for Him. In a letter sent
Unto his brother, he bewailed his loss,
And disappointment that another had
Deprived him of his crown.

“Pierre,” he wrote,
“As far as human likelihood could go,
A martyr-brother might have been your joy,
But God willed otherwise, and He requires
Virtues more stern than mine. Pere Lalement,
Though frail in health, and less robust than I,
Had taken my place a month before his death.
While I was sent among the far Petuns,
A mission more laborious and remote,
But not so fruitful in the martyrs’ palms
As that from which He took me, as unfit,—

Unworthy yet to wear the victor's crown!
Yet if I strive to grow more fit and strong
In virtue and in holiness, God may,
One day, reward me with the grace I seek."

His prayer was heard—for, ere that year had
passed,
In travelling through the woods he was struck
down
And killed by an apostate Huron, who
Hated the Fathers and the Faith they preached,
Imagining his misfortunes came from them!

So came the Crown to Noël Chabanel!
His body was not found. It is, to-day,
A part of thy blest soil, Huronia;
The blood and dust of martyrs sprinkled thee,
Making thee holy in the sight of Heaven,
Fruitful of grace before the Throne of God!



STE. MARIE ON THE WYE.

In sixteen thirty-eight Huronia
With all the missions of the Jesuits,
Was placed beneath the strong and able rule
Of Father Jerome Lalement. He resolved
To take a census of the various tribes,
And name their villages. He, too, resolved
To build a central home, a house of rest
And recreation, where the missionaries,
Weary and saddened, might have converse meet
And spiritual comfort, when the toils
And trials of the missions straitened them.
There they might hold Retreats, and in the time
Of sorrow and of illness, would be helped.

The place he chose for this fair residence
Was on the east bank of a little stream
Now called the Wye, a mile or so in length,
Connecting Lake Isaragui with the Bay
Of Matchedash. 'Twas easy of access;
All land-trails in Huronia centred there,
And the great Georgian Bay that stretched in
front
Opened all points for many hundred miles.
The soil near-by was good for native corn,
Which they would sow and harvest bye and bye.
In sixteen thirty-nine then was begun
A building large and of an oblong shape,
Its length in feet, one hundred seventy-five,
Its breadth was ninety. Here the Fathers' cells,

The chapel and the laymen's quarters stood,
And two large rooms for Indian catechists.
Afterwards other buildings were designed
And built, and round the whole was thrown a
fort
With moat and tower and bastion, that to-day
Can still be seen, though lying low in ruin!

This House was then with joy made dedicate
To Mary, God's great Mother, and became
The central-point of all Huronia.
Here landed all the neophytes from France
And from this door the Fathers set their face
Towards torture, toil, and death!

Here are the names of the illustrious band
Who lived at Ste. Marie—: Pere Chastelain,
Garnier, Jogues, and F. Le Mercier;
Daniel, Le Moyne, and Jerome Lalement,
Chaumonot, Raymbault, Pierre and Claude Pijart;
Menard, Du Perron, Ragueneau, Garreau;
Chabanel, Brebeuf, Poncet, Bressani;
Adrian Greslon, Bonin, and Daran;
And last, the sainted Gabriel Lalement!
Such were the noble souls assembled here
To teach the Indians! At Ste. Marie
Brebeuf had his high vision and beheld
His brothers' garments and his own all stained
With martyrs' blood! From here went Lalement
To join Brebeuf in death at St. Ignace.
Daniel, and Chabanel, and Garnier,
Went out from here to suffer martyrdom.
The fragrance of their memory still remains,
The glory of their sufferings and their death
Still haunts the place, making this ancient ruin
Holy and venerable to Christian eyes.
From this great centre the blest work went on

Of preaching to the scattered Huron tribes,
And Ragueneau in sixteen forty-eight
Wrote thus to Lalement, his Superior:
"The missions here have all surpassed our hopes;
The most ferocious of the Huron tribes
So docile to the Gospel have become
That it would seem God's Angels give us aid,
Crowning our labours while we rest and sleep."
When Lalement and Brebeuf were done to death,
By the wild Iroquois at St. Ignace,
Their bodies were interred at Ste. Marie,
And lay there until sixteen forty-nine,
What time the Huron Missions were destroyed
And Ste. Marie abandoned. Then the bones
Of the two martyrs were conveyed away
To far Quebec. But all their tortured flesh
Still makes Ste. Marie holy!

Since those days

Almost three hundred years have passed away,
And the old Fort has lain there by the Wye,
Forlorn and forgotten. The vast woods
Closed over it and hid it from men's sight,
And but the wild birds and the foxes knew
Where lay the hallowed home which Ragueneau
Had called "The House of God and Gate of
Heaven!"**

But now has dawned a fairer, brighter day,
And the whole world is emulous to show
Homage to those brave men who gave their lives
To Christianize the Hurons. The blest spots
Whereon they lived, and suffered martyrdom,
Are holy shrines; and not the least of these,
Honoured of men for its brave memories,
Is lone Ste. Marie by the mournful Wye!

*Jesuit Relations, xxxiii., page 75.

THE DEATH OF GARNIER

The Jesuit hero, Father Garnier,
Angelic in his face and in his life,
In death was truly Christ-like. We are told
That he was sweet and gentle beyond words;
He drew the Hurons to him by a glance;
His face, his eyes, his gestures, even his smile,
Proclaimed his holiness. The love of God
That burned in his heart, made holy all
His body's movements. Six long, fruitful years
At Teanaostaye, he had preached
Unto the savages by word and deed,
And now among the far-away Petuns
At Etharita—of the clan called Wolf—
He worked and suffered. But the Iroquois,
Relentless foes of all the Huron race,
Came on in strength, and when they knew from
spies
That the Petuns had sent their fighting men
To elsewhere, attacked the town in force!

Then Etharita knew the awful doom
Of Indian war. Women, and weak old men,
And tender babes, were massacred that day!
Fire added terrors to that awful scene
As the red Iroquois with beastly yells
Sprang on their victims. Meanwhile Garnier
Sought not escape, but hurriedly sped round
Before the murderers, preparing souls
To go before their God, baptizing some
And unto others giving the last grace
Of absolution. At this holy task
The foemen found him, and he fell to earth,
Two bullets in his breast. And as he lay
Prone on the ground awaiting death, he saw

A Huron lie, sore wounded like himself.
Then in the missionary's heart arose
The instincts of his kind. He would arise
And comfort that poor soul, and say the words
Of pardon o'er the dying penitent.

Forthwith he rose, and, staggering forward, fell,
And rose again and fell, and rose once more,
Falling a third time as he said the words
Of absolution! And, as sped the words,
The axes of the bestial Iroquois
Pierced the priest's brain. So died brave Garnier!

A remnant of the scattered Christians fled
To Ekarenniondi, giving word
Of these sad things. Two Jesuit Fathers came,
Garreau and Greslon, hearing that the foe
Had fled the scene of blood. At the sacked town
Death and destruction greeted them all round,
And bodies hacked and charred! And, covered
quite
With blood and ashes, they the body found
Of saintly Garnier!

In that same spot
Where once the church had stood they buried him;
And the "Relations" of that fateful year,*
With the grim records of the facts, contain
These touching words: "It was a treasure rich,
To lay in such a rude and desolate place,
The body of so great a man of God!
But the good God will surely find a way
To reunite us all with Him in Heaven,
Since it is for His sake alone that we
Are scattered thus through life and after death!"

*The Jesuit Relations of 1650.

THE OBLATE AND THE HURON

When the brave Jesuit missionaries went forth
To preach the Gospel to the savages,
And face the perils of the Huron Land,
Torture and death,—there went to share their
fate,

Assisting them in the great work of God,
Devoted laymen, who gave all their zeal
To serve the Fathers' wants; and these were called
"Oblates," because they made oblation true
Of soul and body. One of them was named
Robert Lecoq, and he was called "The Good."
Because of his strong virtue. It befell
That on a journey through the wilderness,
This Robert chanced upon a Huron, who,
In deadly sickness had been left to die
By his hard-hearted friends. Compassion touched
The Oblate's heart and he resolved to save
The Huron's life. He built a cabin near,
And taking the sick man he covered him
With his own clothing. Then he started out
To hunt and fish for food.

Weeks passed away,
And still the Oblate stayed with the sick man,
Nursing him night and day till health and strength
Returned, and the poor Huron hurried home
Rejoicing and restored. A year passed by,
And it so happened that Lecoq returned
By the same trail, and as he journeyed on,
He was hard stricken by that dread disease,

Small-pox; and thinking that his end was nigh,
The Hurons who were with him stripped him bare
Of all his clothes, and left him there to die.
On a bleak rock beside the Georgian Bay!

For thirty days he lay in anguish sore
Awaiting death, but on the fourteenth day
The savage he had rescued chanced to pass!
And first the Huron did not know his friend
Because of his disfigurement. But when
The savage heard the voice he loved so well,—
The voice of his deliverer,—he wept
For joy and sorrow! Lifting the sick man
Upon his shoulders strong, he carried him
For four long days until they reached a place
Where he could get assistance. So did God
Reward a kindly act done in His Name,
And Robert, who was called "The Good," was
saved

To care the Master's vineyard many years,
And crown his labours by a glorious death.*

*Jesuit relations of 1640; Clev. Edition xix., page 108.
Robert Lecoq was killed by the Iroquois at Trois
Rivieres in 1650.



BREBEUF AT TADOUSAC.

When, in the year of sixteen twenty-nine,
The English admiral, Kirke, attacked Quebec
And took the city, Champlain in his terms
Requested they should bring him back to France
With all the priests and people. So we find
That he and the two Jesuit missionaries,
Brebeuf and Lalement, with Thomas Kirke,
The Admiral's brother, sailed for sunny France.

At Tadousac they tarried for a space
To victual and refit. One afternoon
The Captain chatted with the Jesuits
And said, "I know full well your purpose here
In this far country. You have come to grab
And to enjoy the goods and chattels left
By M. de Caen, whom you dispossessed."*
And Brebeuf answered meekly: "Pardon, Sir,
We came here only for the love of God,
To face much danger and much misery,
Preaching the Gospel to the pagan tribes."

There was a captain of another ship
Standing near-by, who heard the Jesuit's words.
His name was Jacques Michel, a Calvinist
From France, who held commission under Kirke.
He now in passion menaced the good priest,
Shaking his fist at him and hissing out:
"Aye, Aye! Convert the savages indeed!
Rather you came to get the beaver-skins."
Then turned Brebeuf and answered, "That is
false."

And Michel, furious, raised his hand to strike,
But struck not, for the eye of Thomas Kirke
Bade him desist. Then gently spoke Brebeuf—

Brebeuf, the lion-heart who feared no man—
Brebeuf, the giant who made light of all
The torture of the Iroquois—: “My friend,
You’ll pardon me, for I meant no offence,
And spoke upon the moment without thought.”

But Michel, still in fury, cursed and swore,
Blaspheming much, and threatening the priest,
Till Champlain intervened and said, “My man,
For a Reformer you swear passing well!”
“I know it,” cried Michel, “and may I hang
As high as Haman, if I do not smash
That Jesuit’s’ face before to-morrow night.”

That night the Calvinist, still brooding deep
On his supposed affront, drank heavily
And passed into a stupor, out of which
He never woke. Next morn they buried him
On the near shore, then sailed away for France.

* * * * *

Five years had passed, and France regained once
more

Quebec and all New France. To Tadousac
Came Father Paul Le Jeune, and he was shown
The seaman’s grave, but it was empty then,
“For,” says Le Jeune, “the Indians told me there
That they had dug the white man’s body up,
And with a hatchet chopped it in small bits,
And fed it to their dogs! Then adds Le Jeune:
“It is not well for man to blaspheme God,
Or ridicule His saints, or to conspire
Against his king, or well for him to turn
A traitor to his Land and to his race.”

*Jesuit Relations of 1634, Voyages of New France,
Champlain, III. Vol., Ch. vi., page 255.

THE DEATH OF JOGUES

“I notice a verse in your fine poem on Samuel Champlain:—‘Apart from those great priests who died for God.’—because the 18th of October (tomorrow) is the 273rd anniversary of the death of Isaac Jogues, the Jesuit. When will the time come to see those holy men canonized? Would to God you could see those happy days!”—Extract from a letter written by the venerable Father Lecoq, of Montreal, former Superior of the Sulpicians and of the Grand Seminary.

Almost three centuries have passed since came,
Unto the College of the Jesuits,
At Rennes in France, a footsore traveller,
Pale-featured, mutilated, meanly clad,
Saying he was from Canada! Out rushed
The eager-eyed Superior and cried:
“Perhaps you have some news of Father Jogues
Long lost among the ravening Iroquois!”
And answer made the grimy traveller:
“I am that Jogues,—your blessing now I pray,”
And straightway did he fall upon his knees!

Then spoke the Jesuit Superior:
“Nay, rather let me kneel to you and kiss
Your wounded hands! Brother, I welcome you
As one of Christ’s elected, worthy found
To suffer and to bleed in His dear cause.”

Thus Jogues was welcomed to his brother’s house,
And afterwards, the King and Court of France
Deemed it an honour to bow down and crave

His saintly blessing. And the Queen did kiss
The finger-stumps all hacked away with shells
In fiendish torture by the Iroquois!

Honour and fame were his, and many said:
“Has he not suffered now enough for God!
Let him remain with us that we may know
A Saint’s protection in our miseries.”

But ever did he hear the call of souls,
And from their lodges in the wilderness
The wild wolf-yelping of the Iroquois
Drew him to death. His thirst for martyrdom
Grew more intense.

His body shrank indeed
From pain, yet his great soul but longed the more
To die for Christ.

Ere many days were spent
Heroic Jogues sailed back unto his doom,
“Ibo et non redibo” on his lips, *
And shuddering he re-entered those dark woods
That closed about him nevermore to ope!

He found his cherished dream through mists of
blood,
He found his Christ through surging seas of pain!
Heroic Jogues who cast the world away,
And yearned to wear his Master’s thorny crown,
A saint of Heaven, a martyr consecrate,
Red-vestured stands beside the effulgent Throne!

*Ibo, etc.—“I go, and I shall not return!” Father
Jogues’s words in a letter to France.

THE DEATH OF RENE GOUPIL.

When Jogues set out to gain the Huron Land,
He took with him a pious, earnest youth,
Goupil by name, a Jesuit Novice, barred
From the full priesthood by his delicate health.

In crossing Lake St. Peter it befell
That they were ambushed by the Iroquois,
Who, seizing Goupil, tore away his nails
And crushed his bleeding hands between their
teeth.

Then stripping him, they showered on him blows
Both with their fists and with great, knotty sticks!

After this torture he, with Father Jogues,
Was dragged long miles unto a Mohawk town,
Ossernenon. The population there
Came out to meet them, forming in two lines,
With iron rods and clubs, and forced the pair
To run the gauntlet. Goupil fell, o'erwhelmed
By the fierce blows. He being too weak to rise,
They carried him unto a scaffold raised
In center of the village. Thereon he lay
Battered and bruised; unto the eyes of men
Marred and disfigured; but to angels' sight
All comely with the beauty of God's saints!

His right thumb then they severed from his hand
At the first joint; and at this pain he sighed,
Calling on Jesus and His Mother blest,
For strength and comfort. That night he was
tied

To stakes set in the ground, and as he lay
The Indian children long amused themselves
By heaping on his bare and tortured breast
Red coals and cinders!

From Ossernenon

Next day they brought him to Andagaron,
Thence to another village that was named
Tionnontoguen; then back again
To Ossernenon! Thus like the Christ he made
His Way of Dolours, tortured night and day,
Yet joyful offering all his pangs to God
For Christ's dear sake, till suddenly one day
An Indian with a hatchet dealt a blow
That laid him prostrate—not unconscious yet,—
For, bleeding there, he still invoked the Name,
The Holy Name of Jesus, and received
From sorrowing Father Jogues the precious rite
Of the last absolution.

Two more blows

Dealt by the murderous hatchet fell on him
Ere Renè Goupil's pure and radiant soul
Went to his God!

To-day at Auriesville

Beside the Mohawk's stream there stands a
shrine,
Our Lady of the Martyrs, on the place
Where the young novice died; and pilgrims come
To view the spot made sacred by his blood
And pray for faith and fortitude like his.

AT THE LONG SAULT.

Early in the spring of 1660 a young Frenchman of noble family in Montreal, named Daulac, the *Sieur des Ormeaux*, and popularly known as Dollard, with sixteen other young Frenchmen as comrades, organized an expedition against the Iroquois, then threatening to wipe out Montreal and all New France. The seventeen young heroes made their wills, and after confessing, and receiving the Sacrament, they set out.

At the foot of the great rapids of the Ottawa, called the Long Sault, they encountered a war-party of seven hundred Iroquois. In a fight marked by terrific slaughter, the seventeen white warriors, backed by a few Huron and Algonquin braves, held the fierce Iroquois masses at bay for five days!

Ultimately the heroic little band was annihilated. But the blood-thirsty Iroquois had enough of blood for once, and dismayed by their heavy losses, they abandoned forever their attacks on the white settlements!

Unlike many similar stories, the martyrdom of these young men was not in vain. It was their immortal lot to save New France!—Extract condensed from *The Tercentenary History of Canada*, by Frank Basil Tracey. Vol. I., pages 155, 156.

There is no land can boast a grander deed!
Not Leonidas at Thermopylae;
Nor Regulus, who gave his life away,
Was nobler, in his country's hour of need,
Than those young heroes where the waters speed
Down the long Leap in white and hissing
spray—

Ah! with what glorious crimson tinged that
day,
When France's richest blood assuaged their greed!

Those heroes died; but, like a tiger dread,
Wounded and spent, that licks his scars, and
hies

Back to his den; so homeward sullen sped
The Iroquois, their vengeful enterprise
Relinquished! Thickly matted with their dead
That fated field flung back their last fierce
cries!

MONTREAL

When Cartier sailed up that river-gate,
He saw, above its waters deep and wide,
A lordly mountain rise in sylvan pride
With mighty woods that called to him elate.
Oh, Royal Mount, this was thy day of fate,
When heroes saw thee first, and gladly cried:
“Here is a guardian worthy to preside
Above a city opulent and great!”

To-day, where savage wigwams stood of yore,
A noble city stands in conscious grace;
The murky clouds that to the heavens pour
Announce of Trade and Wealth a favoured
place;
The cross-crowned spires proclaim a saving store
Of Faith and Hope that Time cannot efface!

THE GREAT CANADIAN EXPLORERS

La Salle, Marquette, Cadillac, D'Iberville,
Du Lhut and Luson, Tonty, Joliet!
Their names resound in these great countries yet,
Reclaimed from darkness by their iron will!
Theirs was a task the boldest heart to thrill.

Who shall record the dangers that they met,
When in the nameless wilderness beset
By savage men, and beasts intent to kill?

They circled the great Lakes. Some daring souls
Led on adown the rapid Illinois,
To where it met the mighty stream that rolls
In from the North; and soon they saw with joy
The Mississippi's flood (their goal of goals)
On to the Gulf its curbless tides deploy!

THE FOUNDERS OF QUEBEC
AND MONTREAL.

They passed from out the vales of beauteous
France,

Leaving behind them all they loved on earth,
Bidding farewell to all ambitious hopes
Of honoured place in court or camp. They faced
The perils of unknown seas and savage shores,
The tomahawk and arrow of the tribes
Who roamed the forests! Theirs the holy dream
To found a great new Nation and to plant
The Cross of Christ upon a pagan shore.
Their names are blessed to-day where millions
thrive

And worship in rich temples the same God
Whose Gospel was announced to savage ears
By martyred De Brebeuf and Lalement
And sainted Isaac Jogues.

 Their names sound high

And brave, like Roland's horn at Roncesvalles:—
Champlain, and Maisonneuve, and Cartier,
And Roberval, and Frontenac! The race
Whose blood is theirs remembers them to-day
And holds their deeds in honour. Even those
Not of that race, but sons of Canada
Alike with them, look back with loving pride
To those great sons of France whose princely
blood
Was shed like rain that this great land might
live!

SAMUEL CHAMPLAIN

(Arrived in Canada 1603—Died 1635).

And thou, Biscayan, noblest soul of all
Whom France has sent unto this favoured Land,
(Apart from those great priests who died for
God),

How can the pen describe thee?

Words are vain
To praise thy manly virtues or to tell
Of thy incessant cares to guard the State,
From peril of Famine and of Anarchy,
From Winter's cold, and from the dreaded raids
of Iroquois and Mohawk!

Leading forth
Thy soldier-bands (in number all too few),
Into the horrent woods, undauntedly,
Thou didst confront the ravening Indian
And teach him terror of the white man's skill!

No man was kindlier in the scenes of peace,
No man was bolder in the press of war;
Hero, and sage, and saint, superb Champlain!
Glory undimmed of this Canadian land!
True follower and lover of the Christ
Wast thou, and all thy actions were inclined
To this that thou might'st save more souls to Him
Who died for all upon the ransoming Cross!

QUEBEC

High on her throne beside St. Lawrence wave,
The City stands, a mediaeval queen,
Proud and aloof. The battlements that lean
Over the boiling flood in challenge brave
Proclaim a Nation's birth, a Nation's grave.

The churches' spires that point a world unseen,
Call men to cease their squabbles small and
mean,
And hear His Voice, Who loved, and died to
save!

And memories of the Past loom up and fade,
Of those true hearts who fought for land and
fame;
Here where they faced Death's terrors unafraid,
Long in the peaceful earth their bones have
lain!

O, ye that pass, intent on mirth or trade,
Stop, and salute the Dead on Abraham's Plain!

THE IROQUOIS.

(Huronian; July, 1648-49).

The demons have their counterparts on earth,
Subtle and cruel, gloating as they see
Their victim writhe in desperate agony!
Foul miscreants of some dread and monstrous
birth,

The Iroquois! Their deeds have kindled mirth
Among the fiends of Hell. Satanic glee
Has overflowed in mocking ribaldry
To view of pity such inhuman dearth!

Nothing is sacred from their savage rage;
No mercy dwells within their breasts of stone,
The infant is not spared, nor feeble age;
And when the dauntless Jesuit stands alone
Bound to the stake, upon him they assuage
Their tiger hearts, exulting at his moan!

MONTCALM

True type of gallant grace and chivalry,
A Bayard dying in a losing Cause!
Thy Christian soul disdained a world's ap-
plause,
And duty nobly done sufficed for thee.
The trump of Fame that shrilled so stridently
O'er Abraham's Plain, proclaimed thy name as
high
As his, the Victor's, who laid down to die
On the same sod;—two twined in history!

Ah! who shall these dark mysteries unroll,
Of Fate that death and failure often gives
Unto the bravest and the noblest soul,
Though Nature's self above his coffin grieves?
The Just repine not, flouting Fortune's dole;
Montcalm's great spirit with his Maker lives!

FRENCH-CANADA.

Imagining them true to modern day,
The "Ruling Nations" have gone ages back
To Ancient Rome, on Time's well-trodden
track;
Force, and Imperialism and "world-wide sway,"
Each rival Carthage must be swept away,
Chimneys must smoke and commerce not be
slack;
The pother must not cease till Doom's great
Crack—
Scarce have their children time to laugh or play!

But thou more wise hast kept about thee here
A less archaic culture. There are seen
Thy shrines along the river banks, and clear
The Angelus rings out; thy likings lean
To cloisters and to Crosses. Doubt and Fear
Shake not the hearts that true to Heaven have
been!

THE VALIANT WOMAN.

A Sonnet written for the Three Hundredth Anniversary of The Birth of Ven. Margaret Bourgeoys, Foundress of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and first teacher of Ville Marie (Montreal). Born at Troyes, Champagne, France, on Good Friday, April 17th, 1620. Died at Montreal, January 12th, 1700.

Great is the power of Faith! See Joan of Arc,
A tender maiden facing the rough life
Of field and camp, and mingling in the strife
And clash of war! Lo, how Religion's spark
That sheds its lustre amidst sorrows dark,
Flamed white in Margaret Bourgeoys, as she
dared
The perils of savage coasts, and bravely fared
Athwart wild seas that smote her shivering
barque!

Afar in Ville Marie, at Christ's sweet call,
She laboured midst His poor and desolate,
Founding her Sisterhood, devoted all
To service and instruction. Truly great,
No trials could her valiant heart appall,
No shadows mar her soul's seraphic state!

THE SAGUENAY

Out from the gloomy woods, where eagles scream,
The solemn Saguenay sends forth its wave,
Majestic when the winds of heaven rave,
And when the mellow moonbeams glance and
gleam

O'er the calm waters. Then like gates of dream,
Dantean pillars lifted to the sky,
Eternity and Trinity show nigh,
Frowning above that grim and awful stream!

Unchangeable, as æons pass away;
Dark as the grave, inscrutable as Doom,
You run your destined course, O, Saguenay,
While o'er you God's deep-seated bastions loom!
So drift the souls of mortals on their way
Athwart the uncharted frontiers of the Tomb!

HURONIAN LAKES.

Huronian's Lakes, flash out in sheen
Of silver and engirdling green,
White birch and fragrant tamarac
Your myriad beauties vainly screen!

Hail, peerless Lakes, whose pure floods ring
Their shimmering sands; where breakers fling
Warm spray on glittering Matchedash
And deeply-mirrored Couchiching!

Blue spaces of the happy sky
Reflected in your waters lie,
When in the hush of cloudless noon
The fretful loon makes eldritch cry.

God's artist free, the autumn air,
The shore-line touches here and there,
Till deep with gold and rubies set
The flushed wave burns—a crystal rare!

Huronian Lakes, though Winter close
Your death-cold lips in mute repose,
Not all his icy breath can chill
The joy your summer charm bestows!

THE TRIUMPH OF BREBEUF.

Here upon Martyrs' Hill Brebeuf stood bound,
While 'gainst him raged the cruel Iroquois.

Their bloody knives and searing brands he saw,
And heard their bestial yelping all around!
And when his quivering nerves to pulp they
ground,

And forced red fire into his bruises raw,
To make him wince, his soul betrayed no flaw,
He prayed, but uttered no complaining sound!

Then in their demon-hate they took his life;
Tearing that strong heart out that they might
eat,

And be like him a lion scorning fear!
Huron's hero died 'mid hideous strife;
His spirit soared the Saviour's love to greet,
And mournful night fell o'er the forest drear!

TO GABRIEL LALEMENT

Apostle of the Huron lands,
With body frail, but spirit strong;
Hail, martyred Gabriel Lalement,
In Heaven among the red-robed bands!

O, gentle soul, from bliss Above,
Say, dost thou come to view again,
The scenes of olden toil and pain
Transfigured now by flames of Love?

Ihonatiria's mounded shore,
St. Mary's and Ossossanee,
In sad remembrance speak of thee,
Dear purchased by thy blood, of yore.

The Wye, that rolls by meadows green,
Now hears the fiery engines' scream,
And on its full and eddying stream
The Black-Robe's boat no more is seen.

But when the storm careers along,
The mournful forests cry acclaim;
Their thousand voices shout the name
And fame of Gabriel Lalement!

THE DOOM OF HURONIA

(A.D. 1649).

The forest glades are filled with fear,
Huronian!

The Iroquois are prowling near,
Huronian!

They come with challenge fierce and dread;--
Grim massacre and vengeance red!
Thy towns shall cumbered be with dead!
Huronian!

Arouse thy bravest and thy best,
Huronian!

Now is thy manhood's sharpest test,
Huronian!

Hark to that weird and savage yell—
Stark discords like the voice of hell,
Round St. Ignatius' stockades swell,
Huronian!

Now strike for homes and altars too,
Huronian!

Brave are thy bands but all too few,
Huronian!

Soon are thy palisades laid low,
And whelmed in that wave of woe,
Thy Black-Robe friends to torture go,
Huronian!

Thy day is done, thy sun is set,
Huronian!

And pale thy glories lingering yet,
Huronian!

But Ondistana's glimmering isle,
And Christian's shores that wanly smile,
May guard thy broken tribes awhile,
Huronian!

VALE

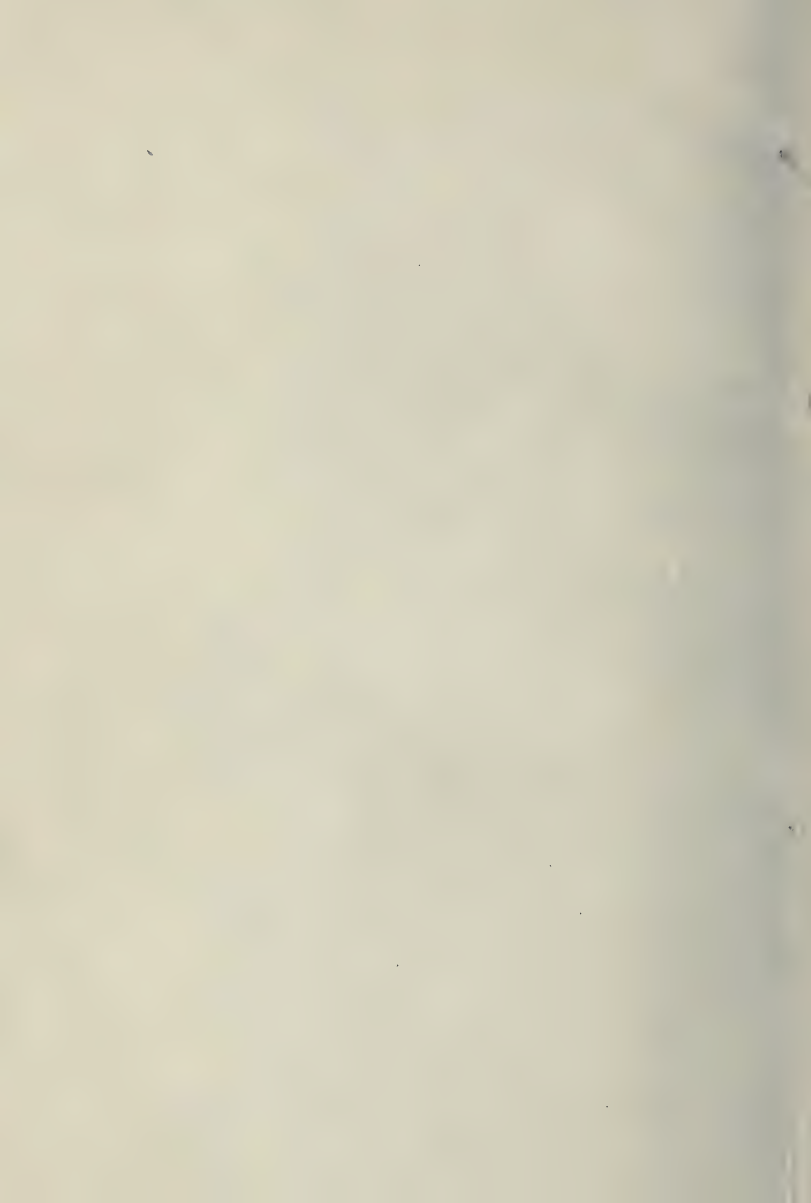
And now the visions waver and fade out,
Of those heroic days. The Voyageur,
The Runner of the Woods, the Jesuit,
The Warrior, the Explorer, the Seigneur,
Pass from the stage, like actors who have played
Their several parts, and played them passing
well!

Farewell! Farewell! Still lingers round my
heart

The glamour and the beauty of those years,
When danger and adventure proved the soul;
When life was lived with more abounding faith,
And men diviner seemed, for that they walked
Nearer to Nature and to Nature's God!

As regards the poems concerning the Huron missionaries, included in this collection, the writer declares his submission to the Decree of Urban VIII. relative to the attribution of martyrdom, sanctity, etc.

Any such word used here is to be taken in its ordinary acceptance only, and not in any way as attempting to forestall the judgment of the Holy See with regard to the beatification or canonization of these missionaries.





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Dollard, James Bernard
The bells of old Quebec.

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